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HIGH COMMISSIONER'S PROGRAMME

REPORT OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters (Sub-Committee) on 1 October 1993 was opened by its Chairman, His Excellency Ambassador J.F. Boddens-Hosang (Netherlands). The Chairman began by welcoming the delegates and the Acting Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. G. Walzer. In his opening remarks, the Chairman introduced the items on the provisional agenda (EC/SC.2/61). The proposed agenda was adopted.

2. The Chairman suggested that the agenda items be clustered in order to make the most efficient use of the time available. This suggestion was approved by the Sub-Committee.

II. STATEMENT OF THE ACTING DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Acting Deputy High Commissioner made an introductory statement. Mr. Walzer noted the departure of Mr. M. Douglas Stafford, the former Deputy High Commissioner, to assume an important position in the administration of the United States Government. He went on to express the appreciation of the High Commissioner and the Office for the work of the former Deputy High Commissioner. Under the leadership of the High Commissioner, and aided by the good governance of the Sub-Committee, Mr. Stafford was able to make a truly significant contribution to the Office's operational capacity, focusing his efforts on performance, effectiveness and accountability. He was a fervent advocate of transparency and of dialogue; he was also a man of great passion and loyalty.

4. The Acting Deputy High Commissioner went on to comment on general management issues that were deemed important in the context of UNHCR's overall performance. He underlined that efficient performance, effectiveness and

accountability remained amongst the foremost goals of the High Commissioner. Enhanced operational response capacity, improved financial systems and monitoring, coupled with the upgrading of information systems, have allowed UNHCR not only to cope with the quite significant and rather sudden growth in activities, but also to maintain and, he believed, improve, the standards of the Office's performance. With rapidly changing demands on the Office and the ever-changing operational environment, action on all these fronts had to be maintained. He then went on to comment on a recent newspaper report which made a number of allegations against a UNHCR staff member in the context of the Office's procurement activities. He shared with the Sub-Committee the results of the extensive inquiry that the High Commissioner had initiated into the allegations; she had found no evidence of abuse of authority or improper action compromising the Office's interests.

5. Speaking of current needs and resources, the Acting Deputy High Commissioner noted that in monetary terms, after a decade of relative stability, with expenditure for all programmes averaging close to $ 500 million dollars per year, UNHCR had faced sudden and dramatic growth in 1991 and 1992. This expansion was mainly due to the events in the Persian Gulf and subsequently in the former Yugoslavia, but also because voluntary repatriation had become a viable solution for several protracted, major refugee situations. He asked for the sustained support of Member States to see through the many humanitarian programmes for 1993. With regard to 1994, whilst it was anticipated that some of the current major programme needs will decline, for example in Cambodia and South-East Asia, he said it was not realistic to assume that overall requirements in the humanitarian sector were likely to diminish drastically. He expressed appreciation of the efforts by both asylum and donor countries in their support for UNHCR.

6. Maximizing the benefits from the limited resources available to the Office remains an overriding objective. To this end, UNHCR is committed to efforts to assure greater coordination in responding to complex emergencies. The Acting Deputy High Commissioner said that UNHCR had followed with great interest the recent consideration by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the coordination of humanitarian assistance. He noted that the discussions currently taking place, under the aegis of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (DHA), on the continuum from relief to rehabilitation and development were particularly vital to UNHCR to assure the durability of its voluntary repatriation movements.

7. The Acting Deputy High Commissioner spoke of the unique and highly effective cooperation that existed between UNHCR and the World Food Programme (WFP). Recently, the two agencies concluded a series of discussions on how to make their working relationship even more productive. He also mentioned that UNHCR was reviewing its contacts with the Bretton Woods and other financial institutions with the objective of soliciting their support, particularly in regard to assistance to returnees. The closer working relationship that was developing between UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was also referred to. A particular example of this successful cooperation was the assumption of the leadership of the International Conference on Central American Refugees (CIREFCA) process by UNDP in July 1993.

8. As UNHCR seeks to build partnerships with other United Nations bodies, it is also convinced of the need to renew and strengthen its partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs). For this reason, the High Commissioner has launched a series of consultations with NGOs aimed at improving thepartnership between NGOs and UNHCR. These consultations and the related initiatives are referred to as the PARINAC ("Partnership in Action") process. After a series of regional preparatory meetings with NGOs in the course of 1993 and 1994, there will be a global UNHCR/NGO PARINAC Conference in Oslo in June 1994, hosted by the Norwegian Government.

9. The Acting Deputy High Commissioner went on to note that in speaking of resources, it was important to remember that UNHCR's greatest resource was its staff. He spoke of the commitment they brought to their work, which was often performed under extremely dangerous circumstances. Several colleagues had lost their lives in the discharge of their duties; he expressed sympathy to their families and friends. He noted that concerns for the safety of staff weighed heavily on the High Commissioner.

10. The Acting Deputy High Commissioner concluded his statement by thanking the Chairman for the support and guidance that he had provided to the deliberations of this Sub-Committee over the last year.

III. REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE INTER-SESSIONAL MEETINGS

11. The Chairman then gave an overview of the work of the inter-sessional meetings of the Sub-Committee. The Sub-Committee then moved on to the adoption of the draft reports of the 18 May 1993 joint meeting of the Sub-Committee on Administrative and Financial Matters and of the Whole on International Protection (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.17), as well as the Sub-Committee's 19 May 1993 meeting (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.18). These two reports were adopted with no changes.

IV. UNHCR PROGRAMMES AND FUNDING

12. The Chairman drew the Sub-Committee's attention to the documents related to the agenda items under this cluster: document A/AC.96/808, Parts I to VI, entitled UNHCR Activities Financed by Voluntary Funds: Report for 1992-1993 and Proposed Programmes and Budget for 1994; document A/AC.96/813, Overview of UNHCR Activities: Report for 1992-1993; document E/1993/20, Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Economic and Social Council; document A/AC.96/816, UNHCR Activities Financed from Voluntary Funds: Report for 1992-1993 and Proposed Programmes and Budget for 1994: Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions; document A/AC.96/810, Report on the Status of Contributions to UNHCR Funds as of 31 May 1993; and the Conference Room Papers which gave updates on UNHCR's programmes and funding projections (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.19) and on voluntary repatriation movements (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.23).

13. The Chairman then invited the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support to introduce the relevant agenda items.

14. Mr. E. Morris, Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support, said that the important item within the cluster entitled UNHCR programmes and funding was the General Programmes target for 1994. He noted that the current budgetary estimates for 1993 General Programmes remained at $ 413.6 million. Although new and additional needs were revealed at the time of the budgetary review in August 1993, these had been accommodated within the approved 1993 General Programmes target.

15. With regard to 1994, the initial budgetary estimates for General Programmes stood at $ 418,523,000. The same provisions as in 1993 had been made for the Emergency Fund and the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation, while the 1994 Programme Reserve amounted to $ 33.9 million. He said that after the review of 1994 General Programmes needs in late 1993, UNHCR would come back to the Sub-Committee with updated requirements.

16. With regard to Special Programmes, the Director referred to the update for 1993 found in the Annex to Conference Room Paper EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.19. He noted that, in comparison to the amounts indicated in the Overview document (see Table V.3 of document A/AC.96/813), there has been a downward revision in estimated needs for 1993. This has mainly been because of difficulties encountered in the implementation of some of UNHCR's major Special Programmes. He pointed out, however, that there had been upward revisions for certain African repatriation programmes in the Horn of Africa and West Africa.

17. In relation to repatriation activities, especially under Special Programmes, he said the information found in tabular form in the Annex to EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.19 should be complemented by the document on Voluntary Repatriation (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.23).

18. The Director concluded his presentation by saying that, at this stage, estimates for 1994 Special Programmes must be regarded as being particularly tentative.

A. General and Special Programmes

19. A number of delegations voiced their approval of the proposed 1994 General Programmes target. The necessity to fund fully the core General Programmes was stressed by several delegations. One delegation said this was a top priority as General Programmes provided a framework for a more effective use of resources. Given the nature of the decisions on General Programmes, there was an inbuilt incentive to review constantly whether programmed resources were needed or not; on the other hand, funds for Special Programmes were rather locked into specific projects, having been given for a particular purpose. It was stressed that the Sub-Committee should keep under review the validity of the distinction between General and Special Programmes.

20. A number of delegations commented on the flexibility afforded by the existence of the Emergency Fund, the Programme Reserve and the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation. Swift utilization of these funds was considered to have saved many lives and reduced the number of appeals having to be issued. One delegation said there was a need to find a method to assure a comparable flexibility in the use of contributions to Special Programmes.

21. One delegation asked for a cautious appraisal of the funding possibilities in 1994.

22. One delegation (United States of America), stressing the priority of General Programmes, said it had increased its contribution to the General Programmes in 1993 to $ 91 million, including a recent unearmarked contribution of $ 19 million. Another delegation (Australia) said that it had increased its contribution to General Programme by five per cent. The delegation of Denmark stated that it would be making an announcement on an additional contribution to UNHCR during the Plenary of the Executive Committee.

23. A number of delegations asked quite specific questions on programme matters, for example the disproportional allocation of university scholarships in relation to refugee populations, lack of projected funding allocations for some programmes, etc.

24. One delegation said it was difficult to get an accurate figure for Headquarter's expenditure. It noted similar comments in this regard in the report of the Advisory Committee for Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/AC.96/816).

25. Several delegations supported quick-impact projects (QIPs) and emphasized the importance of involving development agencies as early as possible in reintegration programmes.

26. In regard to implementing partners, a number of delegations stressed the importance of the High Commissioner's initiative in launching the PARINAC process.

27. Another delegation stated that it was difficult to approve a proposed 1994 General Programmes target in isolation, without having an overview of total needs. It was, therefore, proposed that paragraph 81 (b) of document A/AC.96/813, which sets out one of the summary proposals related to General Programmes requiring the approval of the Executive Committee, be amended by making the following addition:

> "and recognizes that given the current proposed estimates for Special Programme activities for 1994, overall estimated financial requirements will amount, subject to the availability of funds, to approximately $ 1.2 billion."

28. This amendment was accepted by the Sub-Committee. With this amendment, the Sub-Committee recommended to the Executive Committee that all of the summary proposals in paragraph 81 of document A/AC.96/813 be approved.

B. Documentation

29. Mr. Morris drew attention to the report of the ACABQ, especially its comments on documentation. He said that the ACABQ was requesting a radical overhaul. Basically, the ACABQ was asking for a document (of some 100 pages) which would replace the Overview document and which would only contain information on the Administrative and Programme Support Budgets, for example the

revised 1993 budget and the proposed 1994 budget; this would be by country programme and for Headquarters. The ACABQ felt that this information could be found spread throughout document A/AC.96/808, Parts I-VI, but wanted this information more readily available in one document. The "country chapters", under the ACABQ's proposal, would continue, but they would focus on programmatic issues rather than programme support and administrative arrangements. Mr. Morris proposed that at a future Sub-Committee meeting there be a detailed discussion on the question of documentation.

30. A number of delegations thanked the Secretariat for the completeness and increased transparency of the documentation. As regards specific ACABQ comments on the documentation, it was pointed out by several delegations that the main purpose of the documentation was to benefit the Executive Committee and the Sub-Committee, and not the ACABQ, whose role was advisory in nature. Many delegations stressed that the documentation was too voluminous and cumbersome, and should therefore be rationalized and streamlined. In this connection, it was also noted that the agenda was far too large. One delegation suggested that the Sub-Committee deal only with one "core" document, similar to the Note on International Protection. This core document could concentrate on programming, management and budgetary matters and should be similar to the Overview document (A/AC.96/813). Other items would be considered at inter-sessional meetings of the Sub-Committee in order not to overload the agenda. Another delegation said that a list of outstanding issues needed to be drawn up, and that a schedule for discussion of these issues should be established.

C. Voluntary Repatriation

31. A number of delegations welcomed the document on voluntary repatriation. One delegation said that in citing statistics on voluntary repatriation, a more consistent approach was necessary. Another delegation emphasized the linkage between repatriation and the reintegration programmes in the country of origin. One delegation suggested that in situations where collective repatriation movements encounter difficulties, UNHCR take steps to facilitate the repatriation of smaller groups of refugees.

D. Funding

32. Mr. E. Chipman, the Head of the Fund Raising Service, gave an update on the funding situation. As of 30 September 1993, total contributions to General Programmes amounted to $ 283 million. With the carry-over of $ 70 million from 1992, UNHCR had now reached 85 per cent of its General Programmes target, namely $ 353 million.

33. The Head of the Fund Raising Service expressed UNHCR's gratitude to those donors who had made a special effort to make contributions to the General Programmes. He also drew attention to a bulletin prepared by the Division of External Relations which set out information on General Programmes and their importance.

34. In relation to Special Programmes, Mr. Chipman gave an update on the funding situation for Afghanistan, Mozambique, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. He also drew attention to needs in Tajikistan, Benin, Ghana and Liberia.

35. In concluding his presentation, Mr. Chipman underlined the need for a strong donor response at the Pledging Conference in New York on 10 November 1993.

36. A number of donors pointed to their own financial constraints and suggested that UNHCR should expand its donor base, particularly since many traditional donors could no longer be relied upon to meet fully UNHCR's budgetary needs.

V. SPECIFIC PROGRAMME-RELATED ISSUES

37. The Chairman asked the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support to make a brief presentation of this cluster of items. In his introduction, Mr. Morris drew attention to the following documents: Summary Report on the UNHCR Internal Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.20); Update on UNHCR's Capacity to Respond to Emergencies (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.21); Refugees and the Environment (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.22); UNHCR's Cooperation with the World Food Programme (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.31).

A. Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity

38. In discussing the summary report of the Working Group on Programme Management and Operational Capacity, Mr. Morris highlighted some of the policy considerations that the Working Group had addressed.

39. A number of delegations welcomed the tenacity of UNHCR's management in identifying programming problems and suggesting appropriate solutions. However, several delegations felt that the proposed increased delegation of authority to the field should be supported by adequate training and capacity-building of staff. A phased approach, coupled with the relevant training, was therefore to be recommended. A number of delegations also stressed that increased delegation of authority required greater accountability. One delegation criticized the prose of the summary report.

40. In his comments on the interventions, Mr. Morris noted that UNHCR now had two new Training Officers whose job it would be to provide managers in the field with the appropriate skills. The Office also intended to issue a shorter and more "user-friendly" version of Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Manual to assist in this regard.

B. Emergency Response Capacity

41. The Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support, in introducing this agenda item, reminded the Sub-Committee that the enhancement of UNHCR's capacity to respond to emergencies had been one of three goals established by the High Commissioner when taking office. He referred to two new resources which had been added recently to UNHCR's emergency response capacity. In response to a critical need identified in the area of administrative support, UNHCR has created a pool of eleven standby administrative officers, namely four Senior Emergency Administrators and seven Emergency Finance and Administrative Assistants. These eleven staff members have undergone a comprehensive

three-month training programme and ten have since been deployed to emergency operations or operations with critical administrative needs. The other initiative was to ensure that UNHCR's emergency response took into account the special needs of vulnerable groups through the early intervention of well-trained community workers. The availability of these community workers who have been trained and briefed by UNHCR, in particular on the Guidelines for the Protection of Refugee Women and the Guidelines on Refugee Children, was now guaranteed through a stand-by arrangement with Rädda Barnen (Sweden). A third initiative was the renewal of the agreement with Norway and Denmark regarding the Nordic standby arrangement.

42. Several delegates expressed appreciation for the comprehensive report provided on UNHCR's emergency response capacity. There was general recognition that UNHCR's response capacity was now well established and satisfaction was expressed by several delegates for the cooperative efforts with NGOs, Governments and United Nations agencies in UNHCR's emergency response measures. The delegate from the United Kingdom announced that his Government would soon be coming forward with proposals for similar cooperation with UNHCR. Several delegates noted with satisfaction the use of United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) and encouraged the maximum use of this cost-effective and valuable resource in responding to refugee emergencies. It was recognized that stand-by staffing capacities cannot be used as a substitute for longer-term staffing requirements and one delegation suggested that UNHCR be more proactive in engaging indigenous NGOs as a possible measure to address long-term staffing requirements. The view was also expressed that the efforts of UNHCR to enhance emergency operations need to be complemented by efforts in the entire United Nations system. In particular, links between UNHCR and DHA, and other key international humanitarian relief partners, such as WFP and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), should be established for dealing with the initial stages of an emergency. Another delegation stressed the importance of maximizing financial resources by giving priority to joint appeals in emergency situations. One delegation welcomed the High Commissioner's initiative to improve administrative capacities.

C. Environment

43. Mr. Morris introduced the Senior Coordinator for Environmental Affairs, Mr. K. Watanabe. He said that document EC.1993/SC.2/CRP.22 represented an interim report on the work being done by the Senior Coordinator and proposed to look more closely at the issue of the environment at the next Sub-Committee meeting.

44. Several delegations welcomed the appointment of the Senior Coordinator for Environmental Affairs and expressed appreciation for the work being done to develop guidelines for the environmental management of refugee sites, and related databases.

45. Two delegations referred to environmental problems caused by the large presence of refugees in their countries and asked that UNHCR take concrete steps to address these problems.

46. One delegation asked that there be regular reporting to the Sub-Committee on developments in relation to environmental matters.

D. UNHCR/WFP Cooperation

47. The Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support briefed the Sub-Committee on progress made by both agencies in reviewing their working arrangements. He underlined the unique cooperation that existed between UNHCR and WFP. He stressed the importance of WFP having the resources necessary to respond to emergencies, especially in the form of a fully funded Immediate Response Account (IRA).

48. The Chairman welcomed Mr. B. Szynalski, Chief of the Disaster Relief Service of WFP, and requested him to complement the remarks made by the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support. Mr. Szynalski stressed that the goal of the arrangements between UNHCR and WFP was to build on the comparative advantages of both agencies. He noted that WFP had distinct advantages in the areas of logistics and transportation. He also referred to the initiative of UNHCR and WFP to establish joint training programmes on food monitoring in refugee situations. Mr. Szynalski also made reference to WFP's intention to establish emergency response teams.

49. One delegation made a forceful appeal to other delegations to assist WFP in enhancing its emergency response capacity. Whereas UNHCR has flexible budget lines such as the Emergency Fund, the General Allocation for Voluntary Repatriation and the Programme reserve, WFP does not have similarly well-developed budgetary mechanisms. Unless this is addressed, the overall response to a refugee situation will not be adequate, due to lack of food. Detailed questions on nutritional surveillance and stockpiling were also raised by one delegation. One delegation stated that in reviewing the working arrangements between WFP and UNHCR, Governments also needed to be consulted. Another delegation asked whether UNHCR foresaw the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), similar to the WFP/UNHCR MOU, with other organizations.

50. In commenting on this last question, Mr. Morris noted that several such MOUs existed, but none of them was nearly as specific and detailed as the one between WFP/UNHCR.

VI. EVALUATION

51. The Chairman introduced the Chief of UNHCR's Central Evaluation Section, Mr. L. Martin, and invited him to comment on the documents related to the first part of this cluster, namely document A/AC.96/809, entitled UNHCR Evaluation Activities, and Conference Room Paper EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.27, UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women: An Evaluation Summary.

52. A number of delegations welcomed UNHCR's efforts to strengthen the evaluation function, observing that the growing scale and complexity of UNHCR's activities had created an increased demand for systematic reviews of key policy and programme issues. Several delegations commended the scope, quality and importance of the topics included in the Central Evaluation Section's work programme, and said they looked forward to receiving summaries of the evaluations currently in progress.

53. The importance of incorporating lessons learned from evaluation activities into policy development, strategic planning and programme design was stressed by one delegation. It requested that future reports to the Executive Committee reflect how UNHCR is utilizing its evaluation findings to improve programming. A number of delegations suggested that UNHCR could usefully provide the Sub-Committee with additional information on the follow-up to completed evaluations. One delegation also encouraged UNHCR to explore the possibility of undertaking evaluations in collaboration with other organizations, especially in the case of complex emergencies. Another suggested evaluating the institutional capacity of implementing agencies. Another delegation also suggested that UNHCR invite donor countries to participate in joint evaluations.

54. Appreciation for the evaluation of the impact of UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women was expressed by a number of delegations; support was expressed for UNHCR's efforts to incorporate the policy into programme activities. At the same time, speakers took note of the evaluation's conclusion that the impact of the policy had been uneven, and that significant obstacles still remained to its effective implementation. Delegations endorsed a wide range of recommendations presented in the evaluation summary, particularly those referring to needs assessment, monitoring and accountability. One delegation stressed the importance of the collection of age- and gender-disaggregated statistics. Another delegation stressed that the Executive Committee should be kept informed of the implementation of the recommendations of the evaluation of the Policy on Refugee Women.

55. The in-depth evaluation of UNHCR's programme on international protection of and assistance to refugees (E/AC.51/1993/2) as well as the recommendations and conclusions of the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) on the evaluation study (A/48/16 (Part I)) was presented by Mr. B. Deschamp of the Programme Policy Unit.

56. Several delegations expressed their support for the thrust of the recommendations in the report. One delegation felt that the range of issues covered in the evaluation, for example the need for strategic planning, multi-year programming and budgeting, the relationship between General and Special Programmes, etc., were central to the effective operation of UNHCR.

57. It was decided that the recommendations of the evaluation should be considered systematically in the forthcoming inter-sessional meetings of the Sub-Committee; where possible, the recommendations should be reviewed in relation to the ongoing work of the Sub-Committee.

VII. FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT QUESTIONS

58. In his opening remarks to this cluster of agenda items, the Chairman extended a warm welcome to Ms. Lynn Wallis, the recently appointed Director of the Division of the Controller and Management Services.

59. The Controller addressed three agenda items: the 1992 accounts and audit report (A/AC.96/811, A/AC.96/812, A/AC.96.816); the new UNHCR headquarters premises (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.29); and the proposal to establish an inspector for operational activities (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.28).

A. Accounts and Audit Report

60. It was noted that the 1992 accounts had received a favourable opinion from the auditors. The Controller indicated that UNHCR had already initiated steps to respond to the concerns raised in the auditors' report (A/AC.96/812) in regard to cash management, project management and closures, informations systems activities, procurement and property management.

61. One delegation commented on the audit report and indicated its pleasure at the actions that were under way to address the audit observations. The delegation also asked if UNHCR would be establishing an audit strategy for 1994; the Controller confirmed that this was planned.

62. Another delegation pointed out the continuing importance of three principles raised in earlier sessions of the Sub-Committee, namely: the accountability of UNHCR and its operating partners; indicators for a performance-based organization; and strategic planning.

B. New Office Premises

63. The Controller said that the construction of the new UNHCR premises was progressing well and that UNHCR expected to move to the new building in May 1994. It was hoped that in the coming months the Office would be able to make a final decision regarding the "lease or buy" option, especially in the light of proposed rental costs. The Sub-Committee would be kept informed on the issue. The Controller indicated that she has already taken action, in response to the questions raised by the ACABQ (A/AC.96/816), to utilize the expertise available within the United Nations Building Management Services Section in New York to assess the reasonableness of the proposed rent and maintenance costs.

64. One delegation expressed concern that all staff could not be accommodated in the new building. A question was raised with regard to the common space utilization in the new building and how the amount of floor space in the new building, to be devoted to conference and communal facilities, related to that in the existing premises. The Controller was of the opinion that the conference facilities in the new building would be much better.

C. Inspector of Operational Activities

65. In relation to the proposal to create a position of Inspector of Operational Activities, the Controller said that the High Commissioner's initiative should be considered in the context of her concern to strengthen the management capacity of the Office. The proposed post would provide her with a broad based assessment of operational performance in the field. UNHCR felt that the proposed Inspector of Operational Activities neither duplicated existing functions nor the post of Inspector General which is being discussed presently in New York. Nevertheless, UNHCR understood the concerns that had been raised by the ACABQ and would be responding to them.

66. A number of delegations expressed their support for the concept of an Inspector of Operational Activities and for the spirit in which the proposal had been made. One delegation suggested that the position should be approved for a

period of two years and that its effectiveness should be assessed after that time. One delegation said that a revised proposal, including detailed job description, should be presented to the ACABQ without further delay which would allow the Advisory Committee to assess the relationship of the UNHCR post to that of the proposed United Nations Inspector-General.

67. The Chairman asked the Controller to follow up, in the course of this calendar year, the comments of ACABQ on the Office of an Inspector for Operational Activities; he also asked that the views expressed in the Sub-Committee's debate on the issue be absorbed in the new response to the ACABQ.

D. International Procurement

68. The agenda items dealing with international procurement (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.24) and the categorization of posts (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.25) were introduced by the Director of the Division of Programmes and Operational Support.

69. In regard to international procurement, one delegation expressed frustration at the delays in the procurement of medicines. Other interventions expressed confidence in the existing checks and balances in UNHCR's procurement system, which ensure accountability and transparency.

E. Categorization of Posts

70. On the question of the categorization of posts, one delegation considered that good progress had been made in establishing a logical formula that would permit the monitoring and comparability of the relationship between Programme Support and Administrative Posts (PSA) and Programme Posts (PP), both at Headquarters and in the field.

VIII. HUMAN RESOURCES

71. In his introductory remarks on this item and the related document (EC/1993/SC.2/CRP.26), Mr. M. Baquerot, the Director of Human Resources Management, stressed the important role of staff/management consultations on major policy issues. He also focused on the question of occupational stress, and indicated the innovative steps that UNHCR had taken in this regard.

72. One delegation underlined the importance of staff security and the issue of occupational stress in increasingly dangerous situations. On the latter issue, the delegation expressed its appreciation of what UNHCR was doing, and encouraged it to consult with other organizations like WFP and the United Nation's Children's Fund (UNICEF) on this matter. Another delegation asked which steps had been taken to sensitize UNHCR staff to its policy on refugee women. One delegation focused on elements which were not addressed in the Conference Room Paper, namely the need to establish a closer relationship between skills profiles and management needs, and conditions of service for hardship duty stations. One delegation, in welcoming the Conference Room Paper, particularly its treatment of security, recruitment, career development and the

strategic plan for human resources management, pointed out that previous Sub-Committee meetings had already received statements on goals and objectives. What was now needed was more progress in the implementation of these goals, in particular in regard to career development and training. On the question of women, the same delegation had received reports from its sources in the field that the percentage of women protection officers and field officers was not increasing, and it was also concerned that no details had been provided in the Conference Room Paper on women at senior levels.

73. The Director of Human Resources Management, in his reply to the various interventions, said that more effort was needed in promoting UNHCR's Policy on Refugee Women. As regards conditions of service in hardship locations, the importance of the issue was recognized; however, the United Nations Common System was not necessarily geared to the operational conditions of UNHCR, and this placed certain constraints on how far UNHCR could go in introducing improvements. On the question of the compensation package for staff, UNHCR expressed the hope that the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) would not only concentrate on the improvement of emoluments, but also focus on field conditions. Within existing rules, UNHCR was working on improving conditions of service in the following areas: shipment of personal effects, a review of pre-assignment missions, procurement missions, stress management, the possible establishment of local Compensation Claims Boards, etc. It was agreed that for the next inter-sessional meeting of the Sub-Committee, there would be a report on the status of women in UNHCR.

IX. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

74. As there were no other items to be discussed, the Chairman closed the meeting by thanking delegations for the expeditious way in which they had handled the extensive agenda.